

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Memorandum originated by [redacted] Advanced Concepts Div. STAT
ORD, concerning Agency travel policies and procedures

FROM:

Edward L. Sherman
Director of Finance

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

29 August 1979

STAT

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

1. DDA
7D 24 Hqs.

Don:

STAT

1. Attached is explanatory route sheet for Mr. Carlucci and proposed response to [redacted] letter to the DCI.

2. The references to Central Travel should have been to the Central Processing Branch, a unit of OP. OP is in agreement with the proposed course of action and we will arrange for the Chief of the Central Processing Branch to participate in any meetings with the employee.

STAT

[redacted]
Edward L. Sherman

att.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT (O/DCI)

Routing Slip

Boa

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI		X		
3	DD/RM				
4	DD/NFA				
5	DD/CT				
6	DD/A	X			
7	DD/O				
8	DD/S&T				
9	GC				
10	LC				
11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/PA				
14	D/EEO				
15	D/Pers				
16	AO/DCI				
17	C/IPS				
18					
19					
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21					
22					

SUSPENSE DATE: 27 August 1979

Remarks:

To 6: Please review and advise DCI; also, prepare response to [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

U/Executive Secretary

77-2747

Executive Registry
79-4621

15 August 1979

DD/A Registry
File Travel-6

Mr. Director:

On 23 July 1979, the Agency issued [redacted] regarding travel reimbursement changes. Experience over the past several weeks dealing with compliance with this notice leads to the conclusion that the Agency is living with false economy in its travel system. I believe that the time has come for a major revision of the procedures for traveling on official business, but I know that there is great inertia in the system. Over the past two years, several employee suggestions have been put forward relating to this system and possible improvements; but they are always rejected on the basis that Central Travel can already do anything that an employee suggests.

Consider the new requirement that travel in the Northeast Corridor will be done by use of AMTRAK. While it is obvious that a train ticket costs less than an airline ticket, our procedures put us in the position where for many travelers the real costs to the taxpayer are far in excess of the air fare.

1. In order to receive the discounted Government ticket, Central Travel must procure the ticket since the Agency does not issue travel orders.
2. To effect this action by Central Travel, a traveler must go to Headquarters and pay the train fare in advance to Central Travel.
3. When the ticket is obtained, we are informed that the traveler must go to Headquarters again to pick up the ticket.
4. For employees in the Ames Building (the only location for which I have direct experience) a round trip to Headquarters via Agency Shuttle consumes 1.5 hours of working time. Other outlying locations may be more or less depending on the frequency of shuttle service, distance from Headquarters, and the waiting time encountered in Central Travel. In my particular case, I earn \$16.60 per hour. Therefore, two round trips to Headquarters consuming three hours of my working time costs the Agency almost \$50.00 in lost productive work time.
5. If one also adds the "lost work time" encountered by the unrelenting fact that train travel to and from Philadelphia or New York is significantly slower than air travel, the costs to the Agency are magnified.

DD/A Registry
79-2747

EYES ONLY

The saving of travel monies is important but it must not be at the expense of lost productive working time. Therefore, I submit that a revision of procedures is mandatory. For example:

1. Call to Central Travel giving the travel accounting number established for the official trip should suffice for the procurement of the ticket. (Estimated time consumed: 5 minutes)
2. Central Travel procures ticket. (No incremental increase in time spent since it is done under the present system.)
3. Central Travel mails the ticket to the traveler or delivers via courier in those cases where the time is insufficient to assure mail delivery by the Agency mail system. (Estimated time consumed: 5 minutes)
4. When traveler accounts for the advance received for the trip, the cost of the procured ticket will be balanced on the accounting books.

I am sure that other systems can be devised and I am certain that it will not be difficult to find a suitable one which is less costly than the present system.

Were this the only flaw in our travel procedures, I would not bother you with this note. However, the situation with air travel to other parts of the country is only marginally better. Employees have been told that they are required to use scheduled flights which have the cheapest air fares between the destinations in a trip. With the plethora of new air fares, it is hardly cost effective to have GS-12, 15 officers of the Agency spend time keeping current with all the nuances of air fare changes. The employee's safe way out is to have Central Travel make the reservations because in that way the air fare is declared to be the cheapest available. However, once again the employee must go to Headquarters to pick up and sign for the tickets (thereby consuming at least 1.5 hours of work time if the employee is in the Ames Building).

- There are other interesting anomalies. I am informed that Central Travel will make car rental reservations with Hertz or Avis but not with other car rental companies. This situation is interesting in that it is an obviously demonstrable fact that there are several car rental companies who will provide vehicles at a cheaper rate than Hertz or Avis. Such a state of affairs is bizzare to say the least. I am also informed that Central Travel can only make reservations for lodging with certain hotel/motel establishments. If these are inconvenient for the traveler or more costly to the traveler (read taxpayer) than others in the destination area, it is the employee's problem. For an organization which deals in a service and nominally has cost savings as an objective, I find this attitude and state of affairs incomprehensible.

EYES ONLY


Several potential remedies for this situation come to mind ranging from the simple to the radical. For example:

1. We have been told on several occasions via OGC opinion that the use of Travel Agents is proscribed. Since Travel Agents provide the service of procuring tickets, car rentals, and lodging reservations at no added cost to the traveler there must be a way to handle a large fraction of the Agency's travel through such agents while meeting all the legal strictures that may exist. I cannot conceive that this problem is insurmountable. It should be noted that use of the travel agent will reduce the workload in Central Travel since some if not most of the travel reservations now handled at Headquarters will be handled outside. Such a situation could result in increased efficiency in Central Travel or even to a possible reduction in the number of people. And the cost to the taxpayer of the tickets will be the same as if done at Headquarters.

2. A more radical solution might be to put the onus of responsibility on the line managers of the Agency and hold them accountable for transgressions of that responsibility. For example, if my Office (Office of Research & Development) were given a travel allocation at the beginning of the fiscal year with the caveat that it will not be augmented except by your direct and specific approval, the management of this Office would be highly motivated to devise an efficient set of procedures for travel advances and accounting. In an office where official travel is a vital part of the conduct of business (such as the Office of Research and Development) no competent set of managers could permit a time inefficient system to survive very long.

3. If the travel function must remain centralized in the Agency for some compelling reason, then it seems necessary to establish satellite travel centers in at least some (but preferably all) of the outlying buildings to reduce the wasted work time needed to procure travel reservations and tickets.

I bring this matter to your attention because of the inefficiencies present in the current system and because of the tepid (at best) reception given to employee suggestions to improve the situation in the past. As an employee, I am frustrated; as a taxpayer, I am outraged.


Advanced Concepts Division
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STAT

EYES ONLY